



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



**Press Release – 2 April 2008**

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**Respect for human rights crucial for CA election success**

The election for a Constituent Assembly is an historic opportunity for the people of Nepal to turn their hopes for democracy into reality. It is far more than a competition between diverse political parties. Those who will be elected to the Constituent Assembly will be more than representatives of their own political party: they will be entrusted by the population with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution that permanently enshrines the human rights of all Nepalese people. The free, fair and transparent election of a Constituent Assembly will therefore be a success for all Nepalese regardless of their cultural or political affiliations.

The human rights relevant to the 10 April election process are not limited to the right to participate by casting a ballot on Election Day. They include the right to life and physical integrity, to peaceful assembly, freedom from intimidation and discrimination, and freedom of opinion and expression. OHCHR believes that a sincere commitment by everyone to respect these interconnected and indivisible rights will create an environment in which a successful and credible election can take place.

It is clear that not all political actors have made good on their commitments to refrain from the use of violence in the pre-election period. OHCHR has documented numerous instances of the use of intimidation, threats and physical violence by political party cadres. These have included deliberate, and sometimes fatal, attacks against cadres of other political parties. Clashes between party supporters have also resulted in sometimes unintended fatalities, injuries and property damage. OHCHR once again calls upon all parties, including armed groups attempting to disrupt the election, to denounce the use of such tactics, and to respect the rights of all to conduct their activities without obstruction during the remaining days of the campaign.

An electoral process that fully respects human rights can only be achieved if all political parties and the government authorities work together to ensure that all Nepalese people are able to participate without fear of threats or intimidation. In this regard, OHCHR welcomes the agreement signed on 1 April by the leaders of three political parties that they will abide by the electoral Code of Conduct and form a committee to monitor any Code of Conduct violations. In addition, all those responsible for conducting the election, or for providing security, must do so impartially.

OHCHR recommends the following measures to ensure respect for human rights in order to help create a free and fair environment for the election:

- The Nepal Police should conduct prompt and impartial investigations into all serious incidents of human rights violations and abuses;
- Political actors should refrain from exerting pressure on the police in an attempt to influence or impede the course of these investigations;
- Campaign organizers and party leaders should ensure that children do not participate in political activities that put their safety at risk;

- All actors, whether within the political parties, government or other groups, should respect the right of all individuals, regardless of gender, ethnicity, caste or political affiliation, to participate in the election process. Provisions should be made to ensure the participation of elderly and disabled people;
- Threats by political actors that they will retaliate against individuals who vote against instructions, including threats based on false information that the voting process is not secret, must cease;
- Political parties should refrain from directing large numbers of youth to gather in and around polling stations on Election Day, and retract statements indicating that such youth would be deployed for “security” purposes.

“I urge all political actors and every Nepali to abide by the electoral Code of Conduct and ensure respect for human rights during the election process. With such a commitment, I am confident that a credible and representative Constituent Assembly will be elected and a historic step taken towards strengthening democracy and human rights in Nepal,” said OHCHR-Nepal Representative Richard Bennett.